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Charles J. Halperin

**THE DOUBLE STANDARD:
LIVONIAN CHRONICLES AND MUSCOVITE BARBARITY
DURING THE LIVONIAN WAR (1558–1582)***

When Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible, 1533–1584) ordered a Muscovite army to invade Livonia in 1558 he not only launched a war of weapons, but also a war of words. The war propaganda issued by Muscovy's opponents contributed significantly to the development of the negative image of Ivan as a tyrant and the Russophobic stereotype of Russians as barbarians which persist to this day. This article deals with one genre of these sources, the chronicles written by Livonian Germans during the Livonian War: Johannes Renner's *Livonian History*¹,

* I wish to express my sincerest appreciation to the anonymous reader for *Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana* for valuable comments, and to David Goldfrank for providing me with a copy of the recent monograph by Cornelia Soldat, which is virtually inaccessible in the US. I am solely responsible for all remaining errors.

¹ Johannes Renner's *Livonian History 1556–1561* / Tr. Jerry C. Smith and William Urban with J. Ward Jones. Lewiston; NY, 1997.

Balthasar Russow's *Chronicle*², and Salomon Henning's *Chronicle of Courland and Livonia*³, whose selection I will discuss below. All three propagate the same hostile evaluation of Ivan and Russians. All three authors were, and were entitled to be, biased. After all, Russians invaded and ravaged their country, so Ivan and Russians naturally became the villains in their chronicles.

These authors enumerate in graphic detail the atrocities committed by Russian armies against Livonians. Just because the chroniclers were biased does not mean that such atrocities did not occur, but it does mean that the chroniclers were more willing to believe atrocity stories attributed to Ivan and the Russians, the stock in trade of war propaganda. Even though truth is the first victim of war, biased sources can contain accurate information, just as objective sources can perpetuate inaccurate information. However, my main interest here is not in the reliability of these chronicles, although I will briefly discuss various judgments on the matter below. My main focus is on the fact that the chroniclers did not avoid mentioning seemingly honorable and humane actions by Ivan and Russians in addition to atrocities, as well as seemingly comparable atrocities committed by Livonians and their allies. This article poses the question of what intellectual structure enabled the chroniclers to adduce such information, which implicitly at least partially contradicted their hostile depictions of Ivan and Muscovites, without modifying that bias.

A very pragmatic consideration influenced my choice of these three chronicles as objects of study. The translator, Jerry S. Smith, alludes to the pomposity, baroque sentence structure, elaborate figures of speech, redundant expressions, and extremely lengthy compound sentences characteristic of Russow's literary style. Smith also finds extremely long and complex sentences, parenthetical clauses, multiple verbs and adjectives and ellipsis common to Henning's baroque style, making it very difficult to translate because it is difficult to decide what he is saying. Finally, Smith finds that Renner's language poses fewer problems than that of Russow or Henning because his text is straightforward narrative with few comments, interpolations, or biblical or historical allusions, but occasionally he still had to sacrifice accuracy for readability⁴. Urban highlights the "smaller number of specialists" who can still read Russow in the original⁵. Without question my command of sixteenth-century Low German would be totally inadequate to the task of making sense of any of these texts. Therefore, the availability of professional translations by a philologist intended for the non-specialist reader made their selection easy. It should be noted that Peter Auksi wrote his article on Russow based upon the translation into Estonian. Thaden also discusses Franz

² The Chronicle of Balthasar Russow and A Forthright Rebuttal by Elert Kruse and Errors and Mistakes of Balthasar Russow by Henrich Tiesenhausen / Tr. Jerry C. Smith with the collaboration of Juergen Eichhoff and William L. Urban. Madison, 1988. – Because I am following this publication, I will use this form of the name, without the umlaut, rather than Rüssow. According to *Paul Johansen* (Balthasar Rüssow als Humanist und Geschichtsschreiber, ed. Heinz von zur Mühlen. Cologne, 1996. P. 126), the sixteenth-century East German form of the name lacked an umlaut.

³ Salomon Henning's *Chronicle of Courland and Livonia* / Tr. Jerry Smith, J. Ward Jones and William Urban. Dubuque, 1992.

⁴ The Chronicle of Balthasar Russow. P. xxvi; Salomon Henning's *Chronicle of Courland and Livonia*. P. xvii; Johannes Renner's *Livonian History 1556–1561*. P. xiv.

⁵ The Chronicle of Balthasar Russow. P. vii.

Nyenstädt's (Nyenstede's) *Livonian Chronicle*⁶, as does Arved Freiherr von Taube, despite the objections of the editor of the anthology in which von Taube's article appeared, Georg von Rauch, that his "Livonian Chronicle" only appeared in print in the first decade of the seventeenth century and von Taube's topic is sixteenth-century Livonian historiography. von Taube insisted that Nyenstede's works represent sixteenth-century opinion⁷. von Rauch also opined that the chronicle of Lorenz Müller, also about the Livonian War, could have been included in von Taube's discussion. Instead it can be found in the following chapter of the anthology⁸. Descriptions of the contents of the works of Nyenstede and Müller suggest that they did not contribute anything not found in Henning, Russow and Renner. In any event, neither Nyenstede nor Müller is available in English.

We can now turn to background information on the authors. Russow⁹ was a native of the city of Reval, now Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, and an ordained Lutheran minister in the Church of the Holy Ghost, which ministered to the "non-German-speaking," that is, primarily Estonian- and Latvian-speaking, lower classes of the city. His religious vocation and his own peasant origin made him particularly, even uniquely, sympathetic to the peasants and workers who supported the German-speaking elite who collectively ran the country, the Knights of the Livonian Order, the Roman Catholic episcopal establishment, and the burgher class in Livonian cities. The first edition of his chronicle appeared in 1578, followed almost immediately by an unauthorized second edition and later by the author's revised third edition in 1584. There are modern translations into German, Russian, Estonian, and Latvian. The chronicle also provided the basis for a series of novels in Estonian, not translated into English. By 1584 Reval had been occupied by the Swedes, and Russow published with the support and approval of both the city and the Swedish occupation authorities, who he in turn fully supported.

In Russow's identity religious and political motives outweighed social sympathies. Despite his lower-class origin and ministry to the lower classes, his education made him German culturally and he identified socially with the middle-class merchants and artisans of the city. Moreover, he did not endorse peasant uprisings against the nobles. He was first and foremost a Revaler, but he extrapolated his urban loyalty to all of Livonia. He believed that all Livonians should unite against the Russian threat. However, his Reval and Livonian advocacy took second place to his religious moralism, which is hardly unexpected in a cleric.

⁶ Thaden E. Ivan IV in Baltic German Historiography // Russian History. Vol. 14. 1987. P. 379–81, 383, 386.

⁷ Arved Freiherr von Taube. 'Der Untergang der livländischen Selbstständigkeit': Die livländische Chronistik des 16. Jahrhunderts / Geschichte der deutschbaltischen Geschichtsschreibung. Ed. Georg von Rauch. Cologne, 1986. P. 33–36; Von Rauch. Editorial note. P. 29*.

⁸ Arved Freiherr von Taube. 'Der Untergang der livländischen Selbstständigkeit'. P. 29*; Gottfried Etzold. Die Geschichtsschreibung der polnisch-schwedischen Zeit / Geschichte der deutschbaltischen Geschichtsschreibung. P. 42, 46–47.

⁹ These paragraphs derive from Arthur Voobus. Notes on the Chronicle of Balthasar Russow and its Author // Yearbook of the Estonian Learned Society in America. Vol. 5. 1968–1975. P. 87–98; Auksi P. Henry of Livonia and Balthasar Russow: the chronicler as literary artist // Journal of Baltic Studies. Vol. 6. No. 2–3. 1975. P. 111–117; Urban W. 1) The Nationality of Balthasar Russow // Journal of Baltic Studies. Vol. 12. No. 2. 1981. P. 160–172; 2) Introduction / The Chronicle of Balthasar Russow, P. iii–xxiv, especially iii–vii, xi–xii, xvi, xx; Johansen. Balthasar Rüssow als Humanist und Geschichtsschreiber, P. 99–196, 213–246.

The moralist Russow was an equal-opportunity moral critic of all Revalers, all Livonians, indeed everyone, so that his criticisms of Swedish morals in the first edition, although he favored Swedish protection of Reval as the best guarantee of his Lutheran faith, were censored by Swedish authorities in the third edition. His historical analysis was rooted in providentialism, but ascribed the outcome of events to the decisions of individuals or groups, a surprisingly secular approach to history. Spokesmen for the knights and nobility saw only peasant bias in Russow's tirades against their immoral deportment¹⁰. Russow interpreted the Russians as the instrument of divine punishment of Livonia for its sins. He lived in Reval during the Russian sieges of 1570–571 and 1577, so his animosity toward Muscovy was rooted in his personal experience. The purpose of Russow's chronicle was to influence the Hanseatic merchants of northern Germany and the Holy Roman Empire to support Reval against the Russians; its Low German language appealed to a popular, not scholarly, audience, and it was something of a best seller.

Henning¹¹ was born in Weimar. By accident in Lübeck in 1554 he met Gerhard Kettler, future Master of the Livonian Order and Herzog of Courland (Kurland), and became his secretary and eventually ambassador. He conducted the negotiations by which Kettler became Duke of Courland as a vassal of the King of Poland in 1562 and the foreign policy which kept Courland out of the Livonian War. Upon Kettler's death in 1587, Henning became regent for Kettler's young sons. Henning wrote his chronicle in part to contribute to their education. His additional intended audience was restricted to the princes' advisors and principle subjects, and to their relatives in neighboring states. He was an unabashed supporter of Kettler and the pro-Polish policy that enabled him to preserve at least part of Livonia, the southwest bordering Poland, under his rule after the secularization of the Livonian Order and Livonia's destruction as an independent state and partition in the Livonian War. Henning's chronicle first appeared in print in 1590, after Henning's death in 1589. Henning shared the narrow prejudices of the nobles in Livonia, who despised even German-speaking middle-class burghers. Livonian nobles married into non-German-speaking noble families (Polish, Swedish, or French) as long as they were legitimate nobles, but never into Livonian German-speaking burgher families. Henning assumed that his readers shared his class perspective.

Renner¹² was, like Henning, not born in Livonia, but in Westphalia. He served as a notary in Reval and then as secretary to officers of the Livonian Knights in Livonia from 1556 to 1561, first Fogt Jarven Berndt von Shmerten, then Rugger Wolf, Contur in Pernau, and wrote his chronicle in 1561–1562 based upon notes he had taken. By mid 1561, deeming the situation in Livonia hopeless, Renner left Livonia and never returned. After 1578 he prepared a second edition which relied very heavily upon Russow for events after 1561. The goal of the chronicle was, like that of Russow's, to persuade Hanseatic cities and Holy Roman Empire that Livonia could still defeat the Muscovites, if it had their support. Renner's chronicle was not published until the nineteenth century. Renner had excellent access to documents in Livonia during his relatively brief sojourn there, but was not an eyewitness to any of the events he described.

¹⁰ Johannes Renner's *Livonian History 1556–1561*. P. 233–289.

¹¹ This paragraph derives from *Urban W. Introduction / Salomon Henning's Chronicle of Courland and Livonia*, P. vii–xxv, especially xv–xvi, xxi.

¹² This paragraph derives from *Urban W. Smith J. Introduction / Johannes Renner's Livonian History 1556–1561*, P. i–xxi, especially i–ii, x, xii–xiii.

Disagreement over the credibility of these accounts is more apparent than real. Edward Thaden described them as “credible eyewitnesses and intelligent commentators,” who perhaps exaggerated the atrocities committed by Ivan’s Russian and Tatar troops in Livonia and repeated rumors, as well as stories from the pamphlet literature, but who also included accurate summaries of authentic texts and provided reliable information¹³. Robert Frost, while admitting the “lurid exaggeration or crude propaganda” of the broadsheets, objected that Thaden had not analyzed the differing degrees of exaggeration of the broadsheets and the chronicles, insisting that the chronicles did not indulge in the formulaic litanies of the broadsheets but instead provided concrete details that make their atrocity accounts plausible, despite the attempts of (unnamed) Russian historians to belittle the reality of the atrocities by impugning the chroniclers’ objectivity¹⁴. Frost insists that the Livonian chronicles’ accounts of Russian atrocities are on the whole plausible, so his overall judgment of the chronicles’ credibility is consistent with Thaden’s¹⁵.

The issue of “eyewitnesses” should be reconsidered. Henning spent much of his time between 1558 and 1562 as Kettler’s ambassador in negotiations far away from the military front, indeed outside Livonia. He knew what he knew from Kettler. After 1562 he worked to keep Courland out of the Livonian War, and therefore would not have seen what was going on in those parts of Livonia occupied or attacked by Muscovite forces. Russow experienced Muscovite warfare from inside Reval during sieges, but could hardly have acquired first-hand knowledge of events beyond its walls. Renner served in Livonia only between 1556 and 1561. His knowledge of developments even then came from documentary sources. All three undoubtedly possessed much accurate information on military and political developments, but not by “witnessing” Ivan or the Muscovite army in person. Whatever they reported about Ivan and Muscovites came from written or oral reports composed by other individuals who at least claimed to be eyewitnesses.

However, one argument advanced in favor of the reliability of the chronicles suggests the problem addressed by this essay. Frost notes that Henning stresses occasions when no atrocities occurred and the invaders treated the local population with consideration. Russow criticized German, Swedish, and Polish-Lithuanian atrocities, and did not overlook the instances of Muscovite compassionate behavior. Aleksandr Filyushkin writes that Renner, whose chronicle he considers the earliest and most authentic, shows Livonian peasants not only suffered at the hands of Russians, but also of mercenaries from Germany. Russow criticized the degeneration of Livonian morality and praised the ability of hard-working, abstemious, and disciplined Russian soldiers at defending fortresses. Henning deplored Livonian vice, especially drunkenness and gluttony¹⁶. Von Taube points out that Renner did not spare Livonians from criticism; he excoriated Dorpat for its hostility toward the Livonian

¹³ Thaden E. Ivan IV in Baltic German Historiography. P. 377–394, quotation 379.

¹⁴ A good reflection of this attitude would be the views of the recognized East German historian Erich Donnert cited in *Von Taube*. ‘Der Untergang der livländischen Selbstständigkeit’. P. 40.

¹⁵ Frost R. I. The Northern Wars. War, State and Society in Northeastern Europe, 1558–1721. Harlow, 2000. P. 79–80.

¹⁶ Filyushkin A. 1) Osobennosti rasskaza o Livonskoi voine khroniki Ioganna Rennera // *Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana*. 2011. No. 9. P. 93–100; 2) Izobretaia pervuiu voinu Rossii i Evropy. Baltiyskie voyny vtoroy poloviny XVI v. glazami sovremennikov i potomkov. St. Petersburg, 2013. P. 369, 393, 404, 577–578.

Order and Livonian gentry for their military incompetence¹⁷. I leave the issue of whether this somewhat “balanced” portrayal of the darker side of sixteenth-century Livonian society and warfare speaks to the credibility of the narratives in the three chronicles to others; I am concerned with the implications of the “balance” for the image of Ivan and the Russians in the three chronicles.

Clearly these three chroniclers did not agree on everything. Two of the three, Henning and Renner, were not even born in Livonia; they were “Livonians” by adoption. Russow did not share the class prejudices of Henning and Renner. Russow was pro-Swedish, Henning pro Polish. Yet Russow and Renner sought to influence the same audience of burghers and nobles in Northern Germany to support Livonia against Muscovy. In the end all three authors identified politically with “Livonia,” however defined, as a state which deserved outside support to retain its existence in the face of Russian aggression. Therefore the chroniclers differed in their countries of origin, education, vocation, class, conception of Livonian identity, purpose of writing, what if anything they physically witnessed during the Livonian War, choice of foreign ally for Livonia, solution for the preservation of all or only part of Livonia, and whether their purpose in writing was private or public consumption. As von Taube observes, the only thing the three chroniclers did agree about was that Russia was the enemy¹⁸. This unanimity of opinion about Ivan and Muscovy justifies selecting these three texts as evidence in order to explore the negative image of Ivan and Muscovy they shared.

Our understanding of that negative image must be reconsidered in light of Cornelia Soldat’s convincing demonstration that in the pamphlet literature (*Flugschriften*) of the period, that image derived not from empirical observation of current events, but from the anti-Turkish discourse during the second half of the fifteenth century that originated after the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453. Pamphlet authors and compilers projected all of the clichés about the Ottomans directly onto the Muscovites. In unremittingly graphic, even pornographic detail, they excoriated the atrocities of the Muscovite armies, highlighting exotic torture, sexual abuse of women, and the enslavement of captives. The Muscovite discourse of the pamphlets was, therefore, pure fiction¹⁹. Moreover, this pamphlet literature overlapped the Livonian chronicles. Russow may have read pamphlets on the *oprichnina*²⁰, and parts of Henning’s chronicle appeared in pamphlet form²¹. The extent to which the Livonian chronicles borrowed or imitated the fictitious anti-Muscovite discourse of the pamphlets would speak against the historical reliability of their atrocity stories. However, the chroniclers did not

¹⁷ Von Taube A. ‘Der Untergang der livländischen Selbstständigkeit’. P. 27.

¹⁸ Von Taube A. ‘Der Untergang der livländischen Selbstständigkeit’. P. 24.

¹⁹ Soldat C. Erschreckende Geschichten in der Darstellung von Moskovitern und Osmanen in den deutschen Flugschriften des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts // *Stories of Atrocities in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century German Pamphlets About the Russians and Turks* / Foreword by David Goldfrank. Lewiston; Queenston; Lampeter, 2014. – The classic study of the pamphlets: Kappeler A. Ivan Groznyy im Spiegel der ausländischen Druckschriften seiner Zeit. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des westlichen Russlandbildes. Frankfurt am Main, 1972. P. 97, 154–163, had suggested the link between the Turkish and Muscovite discourses but did not substantiate it.

²⁰ In 1565 Ivan established the *oprichnina*, his private domain and the instrument of his mass terror; his bodyguards were called *oprichniki*. Ivan abolished it in 1572. On pamphlets about the *oprichnina* see Soldat C. Erschreckende Geschichten, P. 193–256.

²¹ Soldat C. Erschreckende Geschichten. P. 312–319, 314 n. 632 (on Russow).

rely exclusively on pamphlets as sources. They also utilized documentary evidence, German defector accounts such as that of Johann Taube and Elert Kruse²², rumors and gossip, and each other's works. Yet all such sources also expound the same cliché stereotypes of the tyrant Ivan and his barbarian subjects, to which we now turn²³.

I will examine in detail and in turn passages conveying the negative images of Ivan as a tyrant and of Russians as barbarians, passages demonstrating praiseworthy behavior by Ivan and Russians, passages containing episodes of Livonian and other European atrocities, and, finally, passages that attest to fundamental flaws in Livonian knowledge about Russians. Only a comprehensive presentation of the atrocity accounts in these narratives can convey how obsessed the authors were with such episodes²⁴.

IVAN AS TYRANT

According to Renner, Ivan was inhumane²⁵, cruel, and bloodthirsty (Renner, P. 6), broke his word (Renner, P. 59), and had Livonian commanders flayed with whips and then beheaded them with axes after marching them for five miles (Renner, P. 187–188).

According to Russow, after captured lords of the Livonian Order were taken to Moscow, Ivan had them “piteously executed” by having their heads bashed in by clubs (Russow, P. 85). He ordered the execution of 40,000 able-bodied men who could have been used for war (Russow, P. 127). He was too faint-hearted a warrior to launch frontal assaults on castles (Russow, P. 145). He did not honor some safe-conducts to those who surrendered cities to him and ordered their recipients hung, stabbed, or burned, and their heads mounted on pikes. He had women and girls taken as captives. He executed over fifty servitors of his vassal, Duke Magnus of Holstein, who became his puppet King of Livonia, even though they had opened the gates of Kokenhausen to him, because he was angry at Magnus. He had the eyes of elderly marshal Casper von Muenster put out, and then had him flayed to death; twelve pro-Magnus nobles were sabered to death (Russow, P. 183; also Henning, P. 128). He thought himself superior to all emperors and kings of the time (Russow, P. 186).

According to Henning, Ivan was barbaric, monstrous (Henning, P. 25), treacherous, and arrogant (Henning, P. 27). He committed “describably bestial atrocities” (Henning, P. 52). He was a dreadful monster (Henning, P. 64). He sadistically hit a Lutheran pastor over the head with his riding whip (Henning, P. 129). If he had known the story of the King of Persia who told his two sons to fight to the death over succession and then tortured to death the satrap

²² Taube and Kruse were Livonian nobles who entered Ivan's service after being captured, became actively engaged in Ivan's scheme to make Magnus his vassal King of Livonia, defected to Poland-Lithuania, and then wrote a tell-all account of Ivan's atrocities. Their account also appeared in pamphlet form. *Soldat C. Erschreckende Geschichten*, P. 245–152.

²³ In general negative images of Ivan and Muscovy during his reign in travel accounts derived from a different source, Sigismund von Herberstein's “Notes on Muscovy”. (*Poe M. T. “A People Born to Slavery”*. Russia in Early Modern European Ethnography, 1476–1748. Ithaca, 2000.)

²⁴ To avoid overwhelming the reader with individual footnotes containing a page reference for every episode in each chronicle, and to avoid group citations of multiple page references which deprive the reader of the ability to backtrack each episode, I have chosen to provide in-line parenthetical references with page numbers, in which Renner = Johannes Renner's *Livonian History*, Russow = *The Chronicle of Balthasar Russow*, and Henning = Salomon Henning's *Chronicle of Courland*.

²⁵ Urban asserts that Renner's “concentration on Russian atrocities blinded him to Ivan's motives.” Johannes Renner's *Livonian History*. P. xi–xii.

who claimed to have killed one son in battle (Henning, P. 119), he would have copied that procedure, because “he takes special joy and delight” in novel cruelties (Henning, P. 120). He was a “vain and puffed-up tyrant” (Henning, P. 138).

Several atrocities attributed to Ivan stand out. Russow, following Taube and Kruse, wrote (Russow, P. 125–126) that during the winter of 1570 Ivan’s acts of tyranny in own country, especially Novgorod and Pskov, were “more terrible and hideous than one can find in any chronicle.” A few years before, in defiance of all law and custom, he had executed many people from among princes, military commanders, noblemen, chancellors, clerks, townsmen, and peasants, along with their wives and children. He also killed his father’s brother, Prince Vladimir Andreevich²⁶ and his wife and children, along with his wife’s brother Prince Michael Temriukovich²⁷. He burned villages and towns, drained fish ponds, and destroyed livestock and grain. In 1569 he killed several thousand people, among them many captured Livonians and Poles, at Tver’, where they were drowned.

In 1570 Ivan advanced on Novgorod with his cutthroats, men-at-arms called *oprichniki*, who committed murder and plunder in Novgorod so extensive that not a single house remained untouched. They vented their lust on many genteel and beautiful ladies and maidens so violently that many died. They tied up several thousand prisoners and threw them into the Volkhov River²⁸. Even that mighty river, eight fathoms deep, became so clogged with corpses that the *oprichniki* needed staves to push bodies in so that they would float away. To amuse himself, Ivan ordered several hundred naked women pushed into the river. Ivan’s *oprichniki* hung up citizens by their arms and set fire to their clothing, or tied their arms to sleds and drove about until their limbs were torn from their bodies. The following summer Ivan executed 109 individuals in Moscow. Some were boiled to death, other beheaded. With his own hands Ivan stabbed to death the esteemed chancellor Ivan Viskovaty²⁹.

According to Henning (and Russow), after Prince Vladimir Andreevich Staritskii and other nobles conspired against him, Ivan became even worse, seeking to eradicate them from the face of the earth by destroying them, their wives, their children, their other relatives, their retainers, and their cattle, dogs, cats, and even fish in ponds (Henning, P. 100; Russow, P. 125–126).³⁰

Henning repeated an atrocity story about Ivan that he had heard told by Nicholas the Red, Lord Palatine of Vilna, when Nicholas the Red and Magnus visited Gerhard Kettler, former Grand Master of the Order of Livonian Knights, now Duke of Courland (Henning, P. 100–101). Two brothers could not bring themselves to execute the infant they had been ordered to kill, so they entrusted it to their sister. However, upon returning to Moscow they became fearful that their act of mercy would be discovered, so they decided to confess all to Ivan and request mercy. Like the sly Reynard the Fox, Ivan acted as if he felt compassion,

²⁶ Prince Vladimir Andreevich was Ivan’s first cousin, not his uncle.

²⁷ Prince Mikhail Temriukovich Cherkasskiy was the brother of Ivan’s second wife, Tsaritsa Mariya Temriukovna Cherkasskaya, who died in 1569. When Ivan ordered Cherkasskiy’s execution in 1571, he had probably not yet remarried.

²⁸ Corrected from Taube and Kruse, who erroneously wrote of the Volga River.

²⁹ Viskovaty was the former head of the Muscovite Foreign Affairs Bureau (*Posol’skii prikaz*).

³⁰ This episode may have been extrapolated from accounts of the looting of the estates of boyar Ivan Fedorov-Cheliadnin, which preceded the murder of Prince Vladimir Staritskii and the attack on Novgorod and Pskov.

and asked to see the child to adore it. When the child was brought in, he cuddled it, kissed it, and played with it. The two brothers were overjoyed that they had acted properly in saving the child. Ivan was actually engaging in a typically Russian game of deceit; Russians are far more dangerous when pretending friendship than when expressing rage. They behave like panthers, who play dead to lure apes down from the trees they had climbed to escape the panthers, in order to tear them to pieces. Before the two brothers knew what was happening, Ivan had seized a knife and stabbed the child three times in the heart. He then threw the dead child out a window and watched bears and dogs devour it. He ordered the two brothers struck down immediately with sabers.

The only time Ivan kept his word was when he threatened the inhabitants of a Livonian town that he would slaughter everyone if they did not surrender. Many residents blew themselves up rather than surrender, so Ivan had everyone who survived the explosion sabered, hacked to bits, mutilated, and left unburied as food for birds, dogs, and other wild beasts (Henning, P. 135).

The misanthrope and parricide³¹ Ivan became so upset when his eldest son Dmitrii argued that Muscovy should make peace with neighboring lands that he “unhumanly” slew Dmitrii by stabbing him with his iron-tipped staff, “an atrocity against his own flesh,” as a result of which he never again felt any happiness, but died depressed, like all tyrants (Henning, P. 148)³².

While the editors of the three Livonian chronicles obviously do not believe everything about Ivan recorded in them, nevertheless they accept as historically accurate the depiction of Ivan as a monster, a “totalitarian tyrant,” a “blood-crazed murderer,” a “notorious coward,” mentally unstable and paranoid,” and an “unpredictable despot”³³.

RUSSIANS AS BARBARIANS

To the Livonian chroniclers, the Russians were barbaric, sadistic monsters, whose atrocities they described in graphic, sensational detail. According to Renner, the Russians were cruel, bloodthirsty, and inhumane (Renner, P. 1). They massacred men, women, and children among fishermen. They hanged Livonian women from trees and robbed them of their clothing, silver, and gold (Renner, P. 183). They impaled babies on stakes (Renner, P. 40) or sharp picket fences (Renner, P. 93), and hacked little children in two and left them (Renner, P. 61), or hacked adults into pieces (Renner, P. 66). They placed a huge stone on the stomach of a pregnant woman to force her foetus from her womb (Renner, P. 41). They burned alive a woman hiding in an oven (Renner, P. 76). They cut off the breasts of maidens and women and hacked off the hands and feet of men (Renner, P. 79). They threw fifty children into a well and filled it with stones (Renner, P. 79). They flayed a man and cut open his side, poured in gunpowder, and blew him apart (Renner, P. 79). They decapitated captives after flaying them and cutting off their fingers and toes (Renner, P. 87). They massacred peasants young and old (Renner, P. 61). They flayed

³¹ Ivan was three years old when his father died.

³² In 1581 (before Henning’s chronicle appeared in print) Ivan supposedly killed Tsarevich Ivan, not either Tsarevich Dmitrii, the first of whom, the son of Tsaritsa Anastasiya Uryevna, died by accidental drowning in 1553, and the second of whom, the son of Tsaritsa Mariia Nagaya, outlived Ivan, to be supposedly murdered at the order of Boris Godunov, and then canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church.

³³ Johannes Renner’s *Livonian History*, P. i, 101 n. 35; *The Chronicle of Balthasar Russow*, P. iii, viii, xix, 184 n. 129; Salomon Henning’s *Chronicle of Courland*, P. xviii, 25 n. 2, 100 n. 33.

captives in Moscow with whips of braided flails, marched them five miles to a cemetery and then beheaded them with axes (Renner, P. 188). They drove naked peasants into great fires (Renner, P. 93) and nailed one peasant to a post and suffocated him with smoke (Renner, P. 176). They tied a captured noble to a tree, cut open his body, and let his intestines fall out. They nailed a ferryman to a door and then killed him with arrows (Renner, P. 96). They killed an old forest overseer by cutting open his body, nailing one end of his intestines to a tree, and then beating him with whips to make him run, pulling out his intestines and bringing about his death (Renner, P. 97). Peasants were drawn and quartered (Renner, 95). They murdered captives by snapping their necks in such a way that they suffered for one, two, or three days before expiring (Renner, P. 180). The Tatars cut out the heart of one prisoner (killing him, of course), and ate it, saying that doing so would give them courage (Renner, P. 180).

Russow adds that Russians committed terrible acts of murder, theft, and arson during their invasion (Russow, P. 72). They tortured and tormented Livonians (Russow, P. 113), massacred them (Russow, P. 140), threw poor peasants, their wives and children to their deaths off city walls (Russow, P. 213), hacked to death servitors of Magnus (Russow, P. 185), roasted captives on spits for days (Russow, P. 146, 153), stole the blanket off a dead woman (Russow, P. 165), deposited children on the ice to die of overexposure or drown (Russow, P. 174, by Tatars in the Russian army), put out a noble's eyes before flaying him to death (Russow, P. 184), drowned, tortured, and executed captives (Russow, P. 197, 211), sabered captives (Russow, P. 183), plucked out the heart of the living body of a mayor (Russow, P. 184), ripped a preacher's tongue from his throat (Russow, P. 184), sold captives into slavery, raped maidens and women, threw captives to their deaths off the walls of conquered cities (Russow, P. 213), and starved captives nearly to death (Russow, P. 211). They left the bodies of their victims for wild beasts to eat (Russow, P. 146). When several thousand *oprichniki* arrived in Narva they did not spare a single Russian of high or low station, or women and children. During the massacre they plundered all trading firms, shops, and warehouses, and burned many barrels of flax, beeswax, tallow, hides, hemp, furs, and hides. The smoke and stench were so suffocating so they dug a hole in the ice, chopped the remaining goods into small pieces, and threw them in, rather than burn them (Russow, P. 126). When the Swedes took Narva, they massacred all Russians, but the Russians in Swedish service slaughtered their fellow-countrymen even more brutally than the Swedes or their mercenaries (Russow, P. 214).

According to Henning, the Russians were bloodthirsty "ignorant barbarians" (Henning, P. 26, 112), who raged like savages (Henning, P. 51), and tortured and killed their enemies in inhuman fashion, including stretching them and breaking them on the wheel (Henning, P. 28, 46). They cut down even the young and the old, women and children, who surrendered with their hands raised, or subjected them to inhuman barbarities and atrocities, and then barbaric slavery (Henning, P. 40). Everywhere they went, they plundered, slew, roasted, and burned (Henning, P. 42, 113, 114). They hacked pregnant women in two, impaled fetuses on fence stakes, slit men's sides, inserted gunpowder and blew them up, and slit men's throats and let them bleed to death. They smeared people with thick pine pitch, bound them, and burned them. They gang-raped women and girls, and sold the survivors into slavery to the Tatars (Henning, P. 43, 52). They tore nursing babes from their mothers' breasts, chopped off hands, feet, and heads, and gutted the remainder of the bodies, stuck bodies on spits and roasted or baked them, and then ate them to satisfy their "diabolical, bloodthirsty hunger" (Henning, P. 43)³⁴. Magnus

³⁴ Here apparently the cannibals are Orthodox Christian Russians, not Muslim Tatars.

was led past the naked sabered bodies of sixty of his men (Henning, P. 136). The Russians humiliated noble captives by parading them through the streets of Moscow while lashing them with metal scourges (Henning, P. 61). They beheaded those who fell down, and left their bodies for dogs, birds, and other beasts to devour (Henning, P. 62). Like panthers who play dead to lure apes out of their trees to their deaths, Russians are most dangerous when they pretend to be friendly, and least dangerous when they rant and rave (Henning, P. 101). They are barbarous and dreadful (Henning, P. 106). They massacred innocent Livonian townsmen, wives, and children in retribution for anti-Russian plots in which they had no part. They butchered poor little schoolchildren (Henning, P. 110). Despite safe-conducts to the surrendered occupants of assaulted cities, they sabered them as they departed (Henning, P. 128). Captives too old or infirm to be led into captivity, even nobles, were killed on the spot (Henning, P. 129). Survivors of a castle whose occupants chose to blow themselves up rather than surrender were sabered, hacked to bits, mutilated, and left unburied to be eaten by birds, dogs, and other wild beasts (Henning, P. 135, 137). Their behavior before and after the wedding of Magnus exceed all the bounds of propriety and was too repulsive and indecent to recount (Henning, P. 115).

In addition, cowardice, servility, and impiety characterize Russians. Because the Russians were cowards, they had to resort to subterfuge and deceit to win battles or wars. According to Renner, they schemed to pretend to withdraw under a truce, only to violate the truce and return in a surprise attack (Renner, P. 60). They offered cities privileges if they surrendered, but this was mere subterfuge (Renner, P. 51–52). They offered mercenaries and citizens safe passage with their property if they wished to leave, only to rob them (Renner, P. 61). They promised the bishop of Dorpat that he could retain his monastery under Muscovite rule, but occupied it after the city fell (Renner, P. 67).

According to Russow, the cunning Russians always had an excuse for their actions (Russow, P. 88). They ate meat during Lent to convince Lutherans of their religious tolerance (Russow, P. 120). They relied upon opportunism, treachery, threats, and intimidation, not bravery, courage, strength or force for victory; they retreated at the first sign of resistance (Russow, P. 145). They executed seventy Scots who voluntarily entered Russian service on the pretext that the Scots had been captured (Russow, P. 152). They hacked to bits Livonian subjects of Magnus who had surrendered to Russian forces under the misapprehension that Ivan and Magnus were allies (Russow, P. 185). They offered to let the citizens of Pernau leave safely and return for what they could not then carry, but that was just a ploy (Russow, P. 161–162). They flogged two Junkers of Magnus who did not comply with their orders; committed atrocities against women and girls unheard of among Turks and other tyrants, flayed men, roasted men alive, plucked out the living heart of a mayor, ripped a preacher's tongue from his mouth, executed other people with as much pain as possible, and heaped the bodies together for food for birds, dogs, and wild beasts (Russow, P. 184). They offered inhabitants safe conducts, but then hung, stabbed, or burned them, mounted the heads of their victims on pikes, and sold the women and girls as captives (Russow, P. 183).

Russian servility emerges in a dramatic episode, repeated by Henning from Taube and Kruse. For petty reasons Ivan had prominent a boyar impaled. He survived for two days, and asked to see wife and children to tell them something important. This last wish was granted, and the boyar's last words, repeated over and over, were "God bless" Ivan. The Russians obeyed Ivan out of fear, not loyalty (Henning, P. 119).

Muscovite impiety occurs in the Livonian chronicles in the form of violent acts against Catholic and Protestant religious institutions. The Muscovites carried away church bells (Renner P. 79, 139, 176) and burned down churches and monasteries (Renner, P. 139), not even sparing a convent (Russow P. 158). When vacating a Livonian city, according to Russow, Russians left with their “idols and images painted on wooden boards”; it is no surprise that a Lutheran pastor viewed Russian icons with derision (Russow, P. 207). Henning tells a story to illustrate that the Russians lacked any true religious conviction or sincerity. A young abbot at Magnus’s wedding told servitors of Magnus that he believed whatever Ivan believed (Henning, P. 115). The participation not just of Tatar, but of Russian women in combat or post-combat atrocities such as strangling peasant children incensed Russow and Renner (Russow, P. 213; Renner, P. 43).

In all these passages about Ivan as tyrant and the Muscovites as barbarians no Livonian chronicler ever expressed skepticism at a single incident he had supposedly witnessed himself, heard about from an eyewitness, or read about in a report based upon eyewitness testimony. The Livonian chroniclers found all such horror stories entirely credible not because they fit the clichés of the Muscovite threat discourse, but because the chroniclers believed that discourse to be accurate, regardless of the fact, as we know, that it had been transposed onto Ivan and the Muscovites from the Turkish discourse. Tyrants and barbarians committed atrocities; Ivan was a tyrant and the Muscovites were barbarians; therefore all atrocity stories attributed to them deserved unconditional acceptance as reliable statements of fact.

IVAN AND RUSSIANS ACT HONORABLY

The Livonian chroniclers characterized Ivan and the Russians as devoid of any socially redeeming values, incapable of any human, that is, humane, behavior. However, the Livonian chronicles also included evidence that Ivan and the Russians could at times act in laudable ways, and that the Livonians and other “Europeans” could equal the Russians in perpetrating atrocities.

According to Renner, Muscovite arquebusiers³⁵ were forbidden even to say a harsh word to Livonian soldiers who had been given safe conduct to leave a captured city unharmed. A Russian who snatched a gun away from a Livonian had to return it and was beaten. The Russians kept a list of these soldiers, who had sworn not to bear arms against the Russians again. If any of them were later captured, they were executed, because they had broken their word (Renner, P. 67). When the Russians recognized a former prisoner, a canon from Dorpat, among captured mercenaries, they flayed him, hung him on a tree, and shot him (Renner, P. 181). A wounded Livonian voluntarily entered the Russian camp and received medical attention; presumably he was neither executed nor imprisoned, but allowed to leave when he had recovered from his wounds (Renner, P. 166). The Russians required captured mercenaries at Fellin to surrender their guns, but not their armor or other weapons, and allowed them to leave safely (Renner, P. 181). When Ivan expressed his intention to execute all his Livonian prisoners, his leading bishop³⁶ tried to dissuade him not to do so, lest he incur God’s wrath. The bishop explained that although the Livonians had different customs and rituals than the Russians, they were still Christians. Ivan listened to the bishop and changed his plans (Renner, P. 188).

³⁵ *Strel'tsy*.

³⁶ Presumably the metropolitan of Moscow, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church.

In these stories the Russians behaved honorably toward their Livonian enemies. Their otherwise cruel and excessive punishments of enemy soldiers who violated the conditions under which they were released seem appropriate. The head of the Russian church demonstrates ecumenical tolerance and Christian mercy, and Ivan himself displays a pious respect for his ecclesiastical mentor.

Russow's narrative contains comparable passages. The Muscovites kept their word to let the occupants of Dorpat leave with their wealth, although the Master of the Livonian Knights ordered their wagon train looted (Russow, P. 76). Ivan honored safe-conducts, such as those for Lithuanians whose cities had been conquered by the Russians. Lithuanians were permitted to return to their own country unharmed. After conquering another Livonian castle, Ivan permitted the Polish garrison to leave unmolested (Russow, P. 183, 185). The disciplined *oprichniki* ravishing Narva followed Ivan's orders not to harm a single Livonian or any Livonian property (Russow, P. 126). Even more impressively, Russow, after condemning the moral wantonness common among the Poles, added that Ivan would never have tolerated such behavior (Russow, P. 116). Presumably Ivan was made of sterner moral stuff than the king of Poland.

Henning also recounts instances in which the Russians allowed the population of captured cities to leave with their belongings unmolested, such as at Pernau and Berson (P. Henning, 117, 128). He also recognized Russian courage in warfare. The Russians at Lais displayed great bravery in resisting the Livonian attack (Henning, P. 57). The Russians at Wenden blew themselves up rather than surrender (Henning, P. 137). The Russians defending Polotsk³⁷, according to Heidenstein³⁸, although dying amidst the flames of the burning city, comported themselves with such chivalry that they faced their foes head-on and fought resolutely even when their clothes were on fire (Henning, P. 142). Henning reported that some prominent Russian lords and kinsmen sadly agreed to desert the "dreadful tyranny" of Ivan and shift their allegiance to King Sigismund of Poland, but they were caught (Henning, P. 100). These Russian nobles had sufficient scruples and courage to recognize that the tyrant Ivan did not deserve their loyalty, and at least attempted to act on that realization.

Even Ivan, in Henning's chronicle, has his moments. In recognition of the steadfastness and independence of a captured Livonian noble in refusing to convert to Orthodoxy, Ivan ordered him released from prison (Henning, P. 62). Ivan generously agreed to a request from Wenden captive men who begged for permission to see their wives before being led away. Ivan let the men speak to their wives through shut gates (Henning, P. 131–132). Ivan had Magnus and his men arrested when Magnus attempted to secure control of cities in Livonia that Ivan had not allocated to him. Brought before Ivan, Magnus, on his knees before the mounted Ivan, begged for mercy for own life and the lives of his men. Ivan, his son³⁹, and his chief general dismounted. Ivan bade Magnus rise, "for he was, after all, the child of a great lord" (the king of Denmark). Magnus and his men had previously been disarmed. Ivan now returned Magnus's sword to him. After rebuking Magnus most severely for disobedience of his lord, Ivan promised to forgive him and to spare his life and the lives of his men (Henning, P. 132). Ivan supposedly comforted a Junker in a Moscow prison with the thought that it was

³⁷ Then located in the Grand Principality of Lithuania, now Polatsk in Belarus.

³⁸ Reinhold Heidenstein wrote an account of the campaigns of King Stefan Batory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth between 1578 and 1582.

³⁹ Probably his elder son, Tsarevich Ivan Ivanovich.

the same here on earth as in heaven, the first and the last were equal, demonstrating that Ivan treated the mightiest as well as the most humble, all members of all classes and peoples, on the basis of their equality on earth and before God (Henning, P. 135).

The inclusion of these incidents in the chronicles has not been analyzed sufficiently. First, no passage attributing decency to Ivan or Russians could possibly derive from the pamphlet literature. No pamphlet ever presented Ivan or Russians in a favorable light of any kind. Nor can we attribute these positive stories to the source of the anti-Muscovite pamphlets, the anti-Ottoman pamphlets. Second, no immediate explanation presents itself for their inclusion in chronicles which overwhelmingly present Ivan and the Russians in the opposite light. Early modern chroniclers writing for political or propagandistic purposes did not emulate the practices of modern professional historians who would have felt obligated to include evidence that seems to contradict the historians' overall conclusions. Chroniclers had no such scholarly qualms. They could omit anything they did not want to include, and we would be no more surprised that a Livonian chronicler passed over exculpatory stories about Ivan and the Russians in silence than we are at the silence of some Muscovite narratives about less than edifying actions taken by Ivan⁴⁰. When the Livonian chroniclers wanted to impugn instances in which Ivan or Russians acted properly, they usually attributed these acts to Russian deceit, but they failed to do so in these cases. I have no theory for why the three Livonian chroniclers included such counter-intuitive evidence in their chronicles. However and finally, we can propose a theory to explain how the Livonian chroniclers could repeat such positive stories about Ivan and Russians in their chronicles without making any attempt to rationalize the contradiction between the implicit portrayal of Ivan and the Russians in them and the explicit dominant paradigm of these narratives that Ivan was a despot and the Russians barbarians.

The Livonian chroniclers considered atrocities committed by Russians to be the norm, so that Russian acts of compassion or humanity constituted rare exceptions which did not preclude interpreting the Russian national character as barbaric any more than Ivan's rare decent acts could mitigate moral condemnation of his tyranny. That genuinely honorable behavior by Ivan or Russians was the exception that proved the rule was too obvious to require articulation. Such behavioral anomalies were simply not worthy of discussion. They could be recorded but did not need to be taken into account. This implicit intellectual logic constitutes the unspoken rationale for attributing out-of-character decent actions to indecent people; such flukes changed nothing, so comment would have been superfluous. In effect, such incidents were included but ignored.

LIVONIAN ATROCITIES

The Livonian chroniclers demonized Russians as barbarians primarily because of the atrocities they committed during the Livonian War. However, these very same chroniclers did not present Muscovy's Livonian victims as angels, and described a very similar set of atrocities committed by Livonians, Swedes, Germans and even Scots (the Germans and Scots were usually mercenaries). The chroniclers sometimes justified such violence by the fact that the victims were native traitors, or barbarian Russians, and "deserved" it, but not always.

⁴⁰ See Charles J. Halperin, *Stepennaia kniga* on the Reign of Ivan IV: Omissions from Degree 17 // Slavonic and East European Review. Vol. 89. 2011. P. 56–75.

All three chroniclers, not just Lutheran pastor Russow, agreed that the Livonians themselves were immoral. Russow, although his noble critics disagreed, concluded that God had punished the Livonians for their sins by sending Russian armies to destroy their country. Renner wrote that Livonians deserved God's punishment because of their "drunkenness, lechery, depravity and corruption" (Renner, P. 2). Russow accused the Livonians of "complacency, idleness, arrogance, pompous display and ostentation, sensuality, and boundless debauchery and lasciviousness." Members of the Order of Livonian Knights, as well as bishops and canons, committed incest and adultery, and kept concubines. The laity pretended that prostitutes were "housekeepers" (Russow, P. 51). Despite their treaty obligations, the Livonians turned Russian churches into arsenals, privies, and carrion pits. They desecrated and burnt images of the Savior, the Apostles, and martyrs (Russow's principled intolerance of icons obviously did not apply here). They confiscated the free Russian marketplace, trade, and warehouses to which Russian merchants were entitled, robbing them of their ancient rights and freedoms. They refused to pay tribute, although they had agreed to pay it (Russow, P. 80). (Russow thus condones the official Russian *causus belli*.) Henning criticized the Livonians as debauched drunks and boastful cowards (Henning, P. 28).

According to Renner, Livonians merely tortured Russian captives for information (Renner, P. 162), but tortured to death uncooperative Russian captives who did not provide intelligence information (Renner, P. 40), as well as all Russian captives (Renner, P. 180) and Livonians and mercenaries who collaborated with the Russians (Renner, P. 115), surrendered to them, or spied for them (Renner, P. 59, 60). Mercenaries looted the cities they were hired to defend (Renner, P. 68). Reval privateers burned and looted territory on the Gulf of Finland (Renner, P. 107). After torture, the Livonians executed these men (Renner, P. 180) by hanging (Renner, P. 87, 182), burning at the stake, drowning (Renner, P. 140), or being drawn and quartered (Renner, P. 140). The emissary of the treasonous bishop of Dorpat was captured and tortured. He confessed all and then hanged himself in prison (Renner, P. 59). A captured Livonian serving as Ivan's counselor was flayed with whips; he too hung himself in prison (Renner, P. 77). The Livonians slaughtered Russians who would not surrender (Renner, P. 87), and quartered a mercenary arquebusier in Russian employ (Renner, P. 87) When invading Russia they slew everyone they encountered, especially peasants, plundered everything in their path, and then set fire to villages and cities (Renner, P. 88). They burned a barn in which they had trapped Russians, despite frantic appeals from the Russians for mercy (Renner, P. 141). A native girl whose mother had been killed by Russians clubbed wounded Russians to death (Renner, P. 168). Native peasants who revolted against Livonian rule were all executed after their leaders were drawn and quartered (Renner, P. 187).

Russow recounts that the Duke of Artz, governor for the Duke of Finland, conspired to betray cities to Moscow, and was torn apart by hot tongs and broken on the wheel for his misdeeds (Russow, P. 104). After Duke Johann's successful revolt in Sweden to overthrow his insane brother, King Erik XIV, Erik's former first minister, who had invented tortures to use against his enemies, met his death on the wheel (Russow, P. 112, 114). Unpaid Scot mercenaries tortured and looted at will to recompense themselves (Russow, P. 148). The Duke of Saxony plundered Livonians who had been permitted by the Russians to take their money and silver with them when they abandoned a captured Livonian city and sent them as captives to Sweden (Russow, P. 162).

Livonian horsemen murdered each other and their own peasants worse than the Russians and Tatars (Russow, P. 156). The Livonians massacred captured Russians (Russow, P. 194), as well as the entire Russian population, including women and children, living in occupied Livonian cities, numbering in the thousands (Russow, P. 214).

Henning opined that beheading, being broken on the wheel, and having one's decapitated head on a spike constituted the proper punishment for a Livonian criminal (Henning, P. 39). Mutinous disloyal foot soldiers who surrendered their city because they had not been paid, after looting jewels and silver to pay themselves, suffered the wheel and impalement when captured by the Livonian Master (Henning, P. 62). Henning embellishes the story of Count Artz by recounting his cowardice in the face of death. He tried to save his life by volunteering to spend the rest of his life in iron chains, subsisting on bread and water (Henning, P. 84). Henning also mentioned Erik's minister and Magnus of Saxony (Henning, P. 102, 118). He characterized the Swedish campaign under Pontus de la Gardie to retake Narva as savage (Henning, P. 143). The Livonians reciprocated the Russian disrespect of the corpses of dead Livonian by leaving dead Russian bodies unburied, to be devoured by dogs, birds, and other beasts (Henning, P. 137).

According to Renner, Livonians also used deceit and violated the "civilized" rules of war. They arrested Russians who arrived at a city to announce a truce, and hanged one they recaptured after the Russians escaped (Renner, P. 104). Another Livonian city commander captured and hanged couriers asking for his city's surrender (Renner, P. 163). A third pretended to surrender his city, then opened fire on the Russian delegation approaching the city peacefully to accept the surrender. He then launched a surprise attack and massacred most of the Russian force (Renner, P. 188).

Nor did the Livonians let Russians monopolize the crime of sacrilege against churches. Livonian raiding parties on Russian soil burnt and looted Russian monasteries, killing monks in the process (Renner, P. 78, 88).

Historians of the Livonian War of course know that atrocities were committed by all participants, as in any sixteenth-century war, and that torture of captives and deceit were tools of the trade. What is a bit unexpected is that the Livonian chroniclers not only knew that, but chose to include illustrative examples in their narratives. The argumentative logic underlying this element of the Livonian chronicles is the reverse image of how honorable actions by Ivan and Russians could be included in the chronicles. The Livonian chroniclers, again implicitly, treat the atrocities by Livonians, Swedes, Germans or even Scots as exceptions. Even if most Livonians were sinful, not all of them were, and certainly all of them had not been sinners in the past. Calling upon them to repent and reform entails that the Livonians retained the capacity for abandoning sin. While Livonians, mercenaries from Germany, and Swedes sometimes commit barbaric acts of violence, the chroniclers never interpret such acts as evidence that Livonians, mercenaries from Germany, or Swedes, are barbaric monsters. They were sinners, but still human.

LIVONIAN IGNORANCE OF RUSSIAN AND RUSSIANS⁴¹

We have already seen several instances in which Livonian chroniclers, in their zeal to demonize Ivan and Russians, displayed gross ignorance of Russia, beyond a simple factual

⁴¹ Unfortunately, the editors' annotations of Muscovite history have lapses. Muscovy did not impose serfdom on the peasantry until 1649. Ivan's coronation as tsar took place before he conquered Kazan' and Astrakhan', in that order. A letter dated February 15, 1558 in the Russian fashion, which

error like dating Ivan's birth to 1528 instead of 1530 (Russow, P. 44)⁴². Ivan did not kill his father; if he killed one of his sons, it was Tsarevich Ivan, not a Tsarevich Dmitrii. He ordered his cousin, Prince Vladimir Andreevich, not his uncle or half-brother, to commit suicide during the same year he attacked Novgorod, not several years earlier. The Tatars in Muscovite service were Muslims, and would never have committed cannibalism; neither, obviously, would Russians had consumed human flesh.

Renner repeatedly described the Russians as burning their dead, so as to conceal the extent of their casualties from the Livonians (Renner, P. 43, 75, 185). The Russian Orthodox Christians in the sixteenth century believed in physical resurrection at the Second Coming of Christ. Therefore, dismemberment as a form of capital punishment was particularly heinous, because it doomed the victim to eternal suffering. The Russian Orthodox Church could not possibly have sanctioned cremation, least of all of Russian soldiers who died in battle against the "heretical" Lutheran Livonians; such honored dead were considered martyrs.

Compared to ascribing cremation to the Russian army, Renner's fictitious report that the Crimean khan had the noses and ears of two thousand Muscovite troops sent to Astrakhan' to collect tribute cut off seems to be no more than a minor fantasy, invented to demonstrate Russian weakness (Renner, P. 156)⁴³.

However, it is in some ways typical and in others particularly intriguing that Henning once projects on to the Russians a common Livonian and European form of capital punishment, breaking on the wheel (Henning, P. 28). No Russian ruler employed this excruciatingly painful and gruesome method of execution until the great Westernizer Peter the Great⁴⁴.

CONCLUSION

If Ivan IV had not committed any atrocities – never executed anyone who was innocent, never used torture, never broken his word – he would have been unique among sixteenth-century rulers, a paragon of virtue almost worthy of the sainthood some Russian Orthodox extremists wished to have conferred upon him. Similarly, if Russian armies had never committed any atrocities when they invaded Livonia – never massacred civilians, never raped women, never sold captives into slavery – that would have made them unique among

began with the creation of the world in 5508 BCE, was written during the year 7066, the sixty-sixth year of the seventh millennium, not in the seventh year of the sixty-sixth century. Magnus married Ivan's first cousin once removed, not his daughter or his niece. *Johannes Renner's Livonian History*, P. vi, 46 n. 54, 190 n. 228; Salomon Henning's *Chronicle of Courland*, P. xviii. Grand Prince Vasilii III, Ivan's father, conquered Smolensk, not Ivan. The *Chronicle of Balthasar Russow*, P. x, 134. That the death of his wife and son provoked Ivan's insanity confounds chronology. The only plausible wife-candidate died in 1560, the only plausible son-candidate in 1581. The *Chronicle of Balthasar Russow*, P. xix. The editors failed to correct Russow's identification of Prince Vladimir Andreevich as the brother of Ivan's father, rather than the son of Ivan's father's brother. Prince Vladimir died in the same year as Ivan began his campaign against Novgorod, 1569, not "a few years" earlier. The *Chronicle of Balthasar Russow*, P. 125 n. 61. Maria Sobakina was Ivan's third wife, not his second wife. The *Chronicle of Balthasar Russow*, P. 125 n. 62. Grand Prince Ivan III was the son of Vasilii (Basil) II. The *Chronicle of Balthasar Russow*, P. 300.

⁴² Of course the editors knew that this date was wrong, but chose not to correct the error in a footnote.

⁴³ *Filyushkin A. Izobretaia pervuiu voinu Rossii i Evropy*. P. 366.

⁴⁴ *Kollmann N. Sh. Crime and Punishment in Early Modern Russia*. Cambridge, 2012. P. 405.

sixteenth-century soldiers, more akin to Boy Scots than soldiers. Neither excrescence of Russian exceptionalism is credible. However, that Ivan and Muscovite soldiers committed all the atrocities attributed to them by the Livonian chronicles also strains credulity. Following Soldat, many of these atrocities in the chronicles also occur in the pamphlets, where they are just projections of equally fictitious Ottoman atrocities. Common sense alone creates skepticism about some of the atrocity stories in the Livonian chronicles. For example, how did the Russians accumulate fifty children to throw down a well? Did they raid an orphanage or a school? Did they forcibly isolate the children from their parents in order to murder them collectively? The only documentary account of a Muscovite torture session shows Ivan supervising, but no more. I do not find the garbled story of Ivan stabbing an infant to death and throwing its corpse to be devoured by animals to be at all believable. Among other reasons for discounting it and many stories in German defector accounts such as Taube and Kruse is the fact that Ivan did not carry a knife. Livonian bias, not ignorance, explains the willingness of the Livonian chroniclers to accept such atrocity stories as true.

The Livonian chronicles of Russow, Henning, and Renner display two levels of a double standard. Although they must be given credit for not portraying all Russian actions as bad and all Livonian actions as good, on the first level of a double standard their depictions of Russian and Livonian behavior are quantitatively and qualitatively imbalanced. Quantitatively the sheer number of atrocities attributed to Ivan and Russians far outnumber those attributed to Livonians or other Europeans. Qualitatively overwhelmingly the chroniclers do not project their gruesome and graphic depictions of the worst Russian practices – impaling babies, cutting off women’s breasts and the extremities of members of both sexes, using naked captives for target practice, disemboweling victims, and so forth – onto Livonians. Livonian atrocities are justified by the behavior of their victims, who were traitors, spies, bandits, or rebels, more often than Russian atrocities. For example, Renner saw only justified revenge in a Livonian woman’s murder of Russian wounded, although Renner and Russow found Russian or Tatar women in combat barbaric⁴⁵. No evidence suggests that Livonian chroniclers felt the same outrage at Livonians who exposed Russian corpses to wild beasts, instead of permitting them to be buried decently, as they did when Russians exposed Livonian corpses to wild beasts. In addition, no Livonian bishop describes the Muscovites as fellow Christians deserving of mercy in spite of their religious differences as Ivan’s leading bishop articulated concerning Livonians.

The second level of the double standard of the Livonian chroniclers concerns the conclusions they drew from the behavior of the Russians and Livonians and how they rationalized the seeming contradiction between blanket negative portrayals of Ivan and Russians in the narratives and the occasional positive portrayals of them in these same narratives doing good, the conundrum to which this essay is devoted. The chroniclers found an intellectual rationale to argue, to paraphrase George Orwell somewhat freely⁴⁶, that all people are sinners, but Muscovites are worse sinners than anyone else. This line of reasoning began, in Urban’s formulation, with Renner’s insistence that if the Livonians repented their sins and united, they would regain divine favor and win the war, because the Livonians were “God’s people”⁴⁷. For this reason,

⁴⁵ *Filyushkin A. Izobretaia pervuiu voinu Rossii i Evropy*. P. 369.

⁴⁶ In George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* the pigs who usurp power change “All animals are equal” to “All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.”

⁴⁷ Johannes Renner’s *Livonian History 1556–1561*. P. i.

according to Paul Johansen, in 1578 Russow expressed the hope that Livonia would benefit from God's miraculous mercy, which, by 1584, had occurred. If nothing else, Livonia was free from the Russian menace⁴⁸. Livonians had been and could return to being God's people; their uncivilized behavior was an outlier. Similarly, while Russians, even Ivan himself, could sometimes act with humane sensitivity toward Germans, the chroniclers never question that Ivan and the Russians are and remain barbaric monsters who would never be the beneficiaries of divine mercy or favor. Russow asserted that Ivan used German and Italian instructors to teach Muscovites military discipline, and Henning declared that Ivan was trying to civilize his barbaric subjects by importing European technology⁴⁹. Such efforts, while flattering to European arrogance, were implicitly doomed to failure. Military discipline and European technology could not alter the "nature" of the Russians. Therefore, the Russians were and would always remain barbarians, no matter how many "civilized" acts they performed, and the Germans and their European neighbors were and would always remain "civilized," no matter how many atrocities they committed. The second level of the double standard of the chronicles consists in not letting episodes of "good" behavior by Ivan or Muscovites influence their identity as barbarians, and not letting episodes of "bad" behavior by Livonians or other peoples influence their identity as civilized. Therefore Russians who use deceit in warfare are cowards, but not Livonians. Such judgments did not derive from confessional exclusivity. All three chroniclers were Protestants, but even the Lutheran minister Russow defended all Livonians, Lutherans and Catholics, as virtuous or potentially virtuous, and no chronicler calls all Orthodox Christians barbarians, just Russians⁵⁰. Warfare between Livonians and Muscovites was a contest between civilization and barbarism, between good and evil. Evidence of Livonian vice or Muscovite virtue by definition could not overturn the essentialist stereotypes, propagated without qualification in the anti-Muscovite pamphlets, underneath the chroniclers' perception of Ivan and the Russians. This essentialist argument finessed behavioral ambiguities and permitted the chroniclers to present in their narratives examples of virtuous behavior by Ivan and the Muscovites without sacrificing their prejudices. The bias of the Livonian chroniclers was more complicated than has been appreciated, but its two levels permitted the chroniclers to include in their narratives a modest number of episodes which show Ivan and the Russians in a favorable light. Just as these episodes do not make the numerous atrocity stories from the chronicles deriving from the same anti-Muscovite discourse that informed the pamphlets any more credible, they do not transform the chroniclers from biased partisans into unbiased objective observers.

Информация о статье

Автор: Гальперин, Чарльз – доктор истории, внештатный историк, Университет Индианы, Блумингтон, США, chalperi@iu.edu

Название: The Double Standard: Livonian Chronicles and Muscovite Barbarity during the Livonian War (1558–1582).

Резюме: В этой статье анализируется образ Ивана IV (Иван Грозный) и московитов в хрониках, написанных ливонскими немцами во время Ливонской войны: «Ливонская история» Иоганна Реннера,

⁴⁸ *Johansen P.* Balthasar Rüssow als Humanist und Geschichtsschreiber. Köln; Weimar; Wien, 1996. S. 234–243.

⁴⁹ *Filiushkin A.* Izobretaia pervuiu voynu Rossii i Evropy. P. 396, 577.

⁵⁰ I did not find any comments in the chronicles on the Ukrainian or Belarusian subjects of Poland or Lithuania.

«Хроника» Бальтазара Руссова и «Хроника Курляндии и Ливонии» Соломона Геннинга. Хотя эти авторы происходили из разных слоев общества, представляли разные политические круги и имели свой взгляд на происходящее в Ливонии, все они представляли Ивана IV и московитов в крайне отрицательном свете, негативных терминах, уделяя особое внимание зверствам, совершенным «деспотом и тираном» Иваном IV и варварами-москвитами. Этот дискурс изображения Московии XVI в., который присутствует также в немецких памфлетах того времени, соответствует указанному Корнелией Зольдат стереотипу, скопированному из османского дискурса XV в., негативно изображающего турок. Каждый хронист редко упоминает аналогичные военные преступления, совершенные ливонцами, и еще реже на страницах их хроник встречаются случаи, когда Иван IV и москвиты действовали добродетельно или честно. Такие позитивные изображения были бы несовместимы с дискурсом, определявшим оптику изображения Московии. Данный аспект составляет первый уровень двойного стандарта ливонских хронистов при описании Ивана IV и московитов. Второй уровень двойного стандарта хроник заключается в том, чтобы не позволить эпизодам «хорошего» поведения Ивана или московитов влиять на их сущность как варваров, и не приводить примеры «плохого» поведения ливонцев или других народов, имеющих цивилизованную сущность. Война между ливонцами и москвитами определяется как противостояние между цивилизацией и варварством, между добром и злом. Свидетельства пороков ливонцев или добродетелей москвитов по определению не могли отменить эссенциалистские стереотипы, распространяемые в антимосковитских памфлетах под влиянием изображения в хрониках русского царя и его подданных. Этот эссенциалистский аргумент примирял противоречия, и позволял в хрониках приводить рассказы и примеры добродетельного поведения Ивана и москвитов, при этом не меняя стереотипа их восприятия как варваров и агрессоров. Предвзятость ливонских хронистов имела более сложную структуру, чем до сих пор считалось в историографии. Два уровня восприятия и трактовки событий позволили хронистам включить в свои рассказы скромное количество эпизодов, которые показывают царя Ивана и русских в благоприятном свете. Эти эпизоды не делают многочисленные истории о зверствах москвитов, представленные в памфлетах, более достоверными, поскольку вытекают из того же анти-московитского дискурса, они также не превращают хронистов из предвзятых авторов в объективных наблюдателей.

Ключевые слова: Иван IV, Иван Грозный, Ливонская война, Иоганн Реннер, Балтазар Руссов, Соломон Геннинг, Московия, москвиты, балтийские войны

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Information about the article

Author: Halperin, Charles – Ph. D., Research Associate, Indiana University, Bloomington, United states of America, chalperi@iu.edu

Title: The Double Standard: Livonian Chronicles and Muscovite Barbarity during the Livonian War (1558–1582).

Summary: This article analyzes the image of Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible) and Muscovites in the chronicles written by Livonian Germans during the Livonian War: Johannes Renner's *Livonian History*, Balthasar Russow's *Chronicle*, and Salomon Henning's *Chronicle of Courland and Livonia*. Although these authors came from different backgrounds, supported different policies, and disagreed with each other in many ways, they all presented Ivan IV and Muscovites in extremely negative terms, focusing on the atrocities committed by the despot and tyrant Ivan IV and the barbaric Muscovites, consistent with the sixteenth-century Muscovite Discourse of German pamphlets identified by Cornelia Soldat, a stereotype copied directly from the fifteenth-century discourse about the Ottoman Turks. However, in addition each chronicler presents fewer and less graphic incidents in which Livonians committed atrocities and equally rare instances in which Ivan IV and Muscovites acted virtuously or honorably. Such positive portrayals of Ivan and Muscovites, were inconsistent with that Muscovite Discourse. This constitutes the first level of the Livonian chroniclers' double standard in describing Ivan IV and Muscovites. The second level of the double standard of the chronicles consists in not letting episodes of "good" behavior by Ivan or Muscovites influence their identity as barbarians, and not letting episodes of "bad" behavior by Livonians or other peoples influence their identity as civilized. Warfare between Livonians and Muscovites was a contest between civilization and barbarism, between good and evil. Evidence of Livonian vice or Muscovite virtue by definition could not overturn the essentialist stereotypes, propagated without qualification in the anti-Muscovite pamphlets, underneath the chroniclers' perception of Ivan and the Russians. This essentialist argument finessed behavioral ambiguities and permitted the chroniclers to present in their narratives examples of virtuous behavior by Ivan and the Muscovites without sacrificing their prejudices. The bias of the Livonian chroniclers was more complicated than has been appreciated, but its two levels permitted the chroniclers to include in their narratives a modest number of episodes which show Ivan and the Russians in a favorable light. Just as these episodes do not make the numerous atrocity stories from the chronicles deriving from the same anti-Muscovite discourse that informed the pamphlets any more credible, they do not transform the chroniclers from biased partisans into unbiased objective observers.

Keywords: Ivan IV, Livonia War, Johannes Renner, Balthasar Russow, Salomon Henning, Muscovites
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